



To: California Boaters
From: Recreational Boaters of California
Date: July 25, 2007
Re: **Traditional Call-to-Arms – *Letter-writing Campaign***

► **Contact Your Congressman and Senators**

Recreational Boaters of California is urging boaters to contact their representative in the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate, urging them to support H.R. 2550, legislation that would protect boaters from having to obtain and pay for a new permit.

Please complete the Sample Letter that follows, and fax the letter to RBOC at 916-441-3520. Please do so by Friday, August 24.

Background Information and Instructions

This Call-to-Arms is in support of and in coordination with the efforts of BoatUS, the federal lobbying organization for recreational boaters that is working on this issue on both the legislative front [HR 2550], and the regulatory front [proposed EPA regulations to require a boater environmental permit].

RBOC's efforts include the submission of comments to the EPA as our official position in response to their request for public comment. Our comments are attached separately here as background information.

From BoatUS:

For 34 years the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has exempted discharges from recreational boats from the Clean Water Act permit system. Regrettably, a recent court ruling cancelled this permit exemption. EPA is required by the court decision to develop and implement by September 30, 2008 a national permit system for ALL vessels in the United States for a variety of normal operational discharges.

BoatUS has been working behind the scenes with other boating organizations to get the exemption reinstated for recreational boats. Fortunately, the Recreational Boating Act of 2007 (H.R. 2550) has been introduced by Representatives Gene Taylor (D-Miss) and Candice Miller (R-Mich) which would protect recreational boats from being swept into this unnecessary and expensive permitting system.

It is critically important that H.R. 2550 be passed and boater support is essential. Please contact your Congressman and Senators TODAY and ask that they co-sponsor or support H.R. 2550.

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If the permit system becomes a reality, you will be required to pay for a state permit for each of your boats. EPA will be monitoring your deck runoff, grey water, bilge water, engine cooling water, and the use of copper bottom paints.

The original lawsuit that led to this court decision sought to address ballast water discharges from large ocean-going ships, which can introduce damaging aquatic invasive species into U.S. waters. Keeping our waterways clean and preventing the spread of invasive species is of utmost importance to the future of boating.

But taking a complex permitting system designed for industrial dischargers and applying it to recreational boats will not yield significant environmental benefits and it will come at a very high cost. Requiring recreational boaters to purchase a permit would not prevent the spread of invasive species.

BoatUS has been a leader in educating boaters about Clean Boating practices for more than a decade. Our nonprofit Foundation has funded local education projects on invasive species prevention, helped develop voluntary Clean Marina programs, and authored much of the country's Clean Boating outreach. These positive education efforts are making a difference.

Please ask your elected federal representatives to support H.R. 2550. It is common-sense legislation.

Attached is a sample letter that you can use to communicate with your representative on this issue.

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Instructions – complete and sign the letter, add your residence address, and either fax to 916-441-3520, or mail to Recreational Boaters of California, 925 L Street, Suite 220, Sacramento, CA 95814. www.rboc.org
Deadline – please submit your letter by Friday, August 24.

July ____, 2007

To:

I am writing, as your constituent, to urge you to support H.R. 2550 "The Recreational Boating Act of 2007." This legislation would allow boating to continue in this country as a viable, healthy, family pastime, instead of being saddled with new regulations and permit requirements intended for commercial ships with ballast water tanks.

In 2006, a U.S. District Court decision struck down the 34-year permit exemption for recreational boats within the Clean Water Act. As a result, unless H.R. 2550 is passed, the EPA is required to develop and implement a permitting system for all boats in the U.S. (no matter the size or type) by September 30, 2008.

H.R. 2550 does not weaken or reverse any current environmental regulations. It simply allows boats to be operated the same way they are being operated this year, without an onerous and costly permit system.

Boating is a wholesome recreational activity for the entire family. Here in California we have the opportunity to boat in the Pacific Ocean not only in our state but also along the entire western US coastline. The San Francisco Bay and Delta is another location that has significant use by boaters year round. Approximately half of the boats registered in California are trailerable and can utilize most of the states great lakes and rivers. A costly new permit for boats will hit Californians especially hard due to the economic burden that will come with the permit. My family will certainly be impacted.

There are an estimated 13 million recreational boats in the country over 1 million of which are in California, and offer a great way of life to boaters. More than 850,000 jobs nationwide are in the marine industry. H.R. 2550 is legislation that will keep boating intact. As a recreational boater and constituent I urge you to actively support this legislation by either co-sponsoring the bill or voting for its passage.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Name

Address

Street

City – State - Zip